

News Release
U.S. Department of Justice
United States Attorney
District of Rhode Island

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Guilty plea in a shooting incident outside a nightclub

Raul Soto, of Central Falls, has pleaded guilty to being a felon in possession of a firearm in connection with an early morning shooting incident outside a Providence nightclub in March.

United States Attorney Robert Clark Corrente announced the guilty plea, which Soto entered yesterday before U.S. District Court Judge Mary M. Lisi in U.S. District Court, Providence.

At the plea hearing, Assistant U.S. Attorney Terrence P. Donnelly said that, had the case gone to trial, the government would have proven that, at about 2:00 AM on March 5, Providence Police officers were attempting to disburse a crowd in front of Club Pulse at 86 Crary Street, when they saw two men fighting. As the officers approached, they heard gunshots and saw a man holding a black pistol.

After taking cover, the officers heard additional gunshots and one of them saw a muzzle flash from a window of a gold Honda Accord as it pulled away from the scene. One officer was so close to the shooting that he temporarily lost his hearing.

Officers pursued the Accord, which went out of control and crashed against street curbing on Allens Avenue. Assistant U.S. Attorney Donnelly said that the driver, later identified as Soto, refused orders to exit the vehicle and show his left hand. Officers arrested Soto and seized a

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black, .40-caliber pistol from under the driver's seat.

Soto, 31 (DOB 6/1/74), of 23 Tiffany Street, Central Falls, has a prior conviction for assault with a dangerous weapon and is prohibited under federal law from possessing a firearm. The statutory maximum penalty for being a felon in possession of a firearm is ten years in federal prison and a \$250,000 fine.

Soto is detained pending sentencing, which is scheduled for August 26. He also faces state charges in connection with the shooting.

Providence Police and the **Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives** investigated the case.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Richard W. Rose is prosecuting the case as part of **Project Safe Neighborhoods**, a Department of Justice initiative against gun crimes. Assistant U.S. Attorney Donnelly represented the government at the hearing.

Under Project Safe Neighborhoods, the U.S. Attorney's Office, working with Providence Police, ATF, the Rhode Island Attorney General's Office, and other agencies, aggressively prosecutes federal firearms offenses in an effort to incarcerate those responsible for gun violence and deter others from committing gun crimes. Since 2001, federal firearms prosecutions in Rhode Island have more than doubled and gun offenders have been sentenced to a total of more than 600 years in federal prison.

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